

1 SO. CAL. EQUAL ACCESS GROUP
Jason J. Kim (SBN 190246)
2 Jason Yoon (SBN 306137)
Kevin Hong (SBN 299040)
3 101 S. Western Ave., Second Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90004
4 Telephone: (213) 252-8008
Facsimile: (213) 252-8009
scalequalaccess@yahoo.com
5

6 Attorneys for Plaintiff
DENNIS COOPER
7

8 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
9 **CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

10
11 DENNIS COOPER,
12 Plaintiff,

13 vs.

14
15 THE VONS COMPANIES, INC.; and
16 DOES 1 to 10,
17 Defendants.
18
19
20
21
22

Case No.:

COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE
RELIEF AND DAMAGES FOR DENIAL
OF CIVIL RIGHTS OF A DISABLED
PERSON IN VIOLATIONS OF

1. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES
ACT, 42 U.S.C. §12131 et seq.;

2. CALIFORNIA'S UNRUH CIVIL
RIGHTS ACT;

3. CALIFORNIA'S DISABLED
PERSONS ACT;

4. CALIFORNIA HEALTH & SAFETY
CODE;

5. NEGLIGENCE

23 Plaintiff DENNIS COOPER ("Plaintiff") complains of Defendants THE VONS
24 COMPANIES, INC.; and DOES 1 to 10 ("Defendants") and alleges as follows:

25 **PARTIES**

26 1. Plaintiff is a California resident with a physical disability. Plaintiff is
27 paraplegic, suffers from immobility syndrome with chronic pain, and is substantially
28

1 limited in his ability to walk. Plaintiff requires the use of a wheelchair at all times when
2 traveling in public.

3 2. Defendants are, or were at the time of the incident, the real property owners,
4 business operators, lessors and/or lessees of the real property for a grocery store
5 (“Business”) located at or about 6351 Haven Ave., Rancho Cucamonga, California.

6 3. The true names and capacities, whether individual, corporate, associate or
7 otherwise of Defendant DOES 1 through 10, and each of them, are unknown to Plaintiff,
8 who therefore sues said Defendants by such fictitious names. Plaintiff will ask leave of
9 Court to amend this Complaint when the true names and capacities have been
10 ascertained. Plaintiff is informed and believes and, based thereon, alleges that each such
11 fictitiously named Defendants are responsible in some manner, and therefore, liable to
12 Plaintiff for the acts herein alleged.

13 4. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges that, at all relevant
14 times, each of the Defendants was the agent, employee, or alter-ego of each of the other
15 Defendants, and/or was acting in concert with each of the other Defendants, and in doing
16 the things alleged herein was acting with the knowledge and consent of the other
17 Defendants and within the course and scope of such agency or employment relationship.

18 5. Whenever and wherever reference is made in this Complaint to any act or
19 failure to act by a defendant or Defendants, such allegations and references shall also be
20 deemed to mean the acts and failures to act of each Defendant acting individually, jointly
21 and severally.

22 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

23 6. The Court has jurisdiction of this action pursuant to 28 USC §§ 1331 and
24 1343 for violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, (42 USC §12101, *et*
25 *seq.*).

26 7. Pursuant to pendant jurisdiction, attendant and related causes of action,
27 arising from the same nucleus of operating facts, are also brought under California law,
28

1 including, but not limited to, violations of California Civil Code §§51, 51.5, 52(a), 52.1,
2 54, 54., 54.3 and 55.

3 8. Plaintiff's claims are authorized by 28 USC §§ 2201 and 2202.

4 9. Venue is proper in this court pursuant to 28 USC §1391(b). The real
5 property which is the subject of this action is located in this district, San Bernardino
6 County, California, and that all actions complained of herein take place in this district.

7 **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

8 10. In or about April of 2023, Plaintiff went to the Business.

9 11. The Business is a grocery store business establishment, open to the public,
10 and is a place of public accommodation that affects commerce through its operation.
11 Defendants provide parking spaces for customers.

12 12. While attempting to enter the Business during each visit, Plaintiff personally
13 encountered a number of barriers that interfered with his ability to use and enjoy the
14 goods, services, privileges, and accommodations offered at the Business.

15 13. To the extent of Plaintiff's personal knowledge, the barriers at the Business
16 included, but were not limited to, the following:

17 a. Defendants failed to comply with the federal and state standards for
18 the parking space designated for persons with disabilities. Defendants
19 failed to provide the parking space identification sign with the
20 International Symbol of Accessibility.

21 b. Defendants failed to comply with the federal and state standards for
22 the parking space designated for persons with disabilities. Defendants
23 failed to post required signage such as "Van Accessible," "Minimum
24 Fine \$250" and "Unauthorized Parking."

25 14. These barriers and conditions denied Plaintiff the full and equal access to the
26 Business and caused Plaintiff difficulty and frustration. Plaintiff wishes to return and
27 patronize the Business; however, Plaintiff is deterred from visiting the Business because
28

1 his knowledge of these violations prevents him from returning until the barriers are
2 removed.

3 15. Based on the violations, Plaintiff alleges, on information and belief, that
4 there are additional barriers to accessibility at the Business after further site inspection.
5 Plaintiff seeks to have all barriers related to his disability remedied. *See Doran v. 7-
6 Eleven, Inc.* 524 F.3d 1034 (9th Cir. 2008).

7 16. In addition, Plaintiff alleges, on information and belief, that Defendants
8 knew that particular barriers render the Business inaccessible, violate state and federal
9 law, and interfere with access for the physically disabled.

10 17. At all relevant times, Defendants had and still have control and dominion
11 over the conditions at this location and had and still have the financial resources to
12 remove these barriers without much difficulty or expenses to make the Business
13 accessible to the physically disabled in compliance with ADDAG and Title 24
14 regulations. Defendants have not removed such barriers and have not modified the
15 Business to conform to accessibility regulations.

16 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

17 **VIOLATION OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990**

18 18. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
19 paragraphs in this complaint.

20 19. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), no individual
21 shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of
22 the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of
23 public accommodation by any person who owns, leases, or leases to, or operates a place
24 of public accommodation. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a).

25 20. Discrimination, *inter alia*, includes:

- 26 a. A failure to make reasonable modification in policies, practices, or
27 procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford such
28 goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations

1 to individuals with disabilities, unless the entity can demonstrate that
2 making such modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of
3 such goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or
4 accommodations. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(ii).

5 b. A failure to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that no
6 individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or
7 otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the
8 absence of auxiliary aids and services, unless the entity can
9 demonstrate that taking such steps would fundamentally alter the
10 nature of the good, service, facility, privilege, advantage, or
11 accommodation being offered or would result in an undue burden. 42
12 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iii).

13 c. A failure to remove architectural barriers, and communication barriers
14 that are structural in nature, in existing facilities, and transportation
15 barriers in existing vehicles and rail passenger cars used by an
16 establishment for transporting individuals (not including barriers that
17 can only be removed through the retrofitting of vehicles or rail
18 passenger cars by the installation of a hydraulic or other lift), where
19 such removal is readily achievable. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv).

20 d. A failure to make alterations in such a manner that, to the maximum
21 extent feasible, the altered portions of the facility are readily
22 accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including
23 individuals who use wheelchairs or to ensure that, to the maximum
24 extent feasible, the path of travel to the altered area and the
25 bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered
26 area, are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with
27 disabilities where such alterations to the path or travel or the
28 bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered area

1 are not disproportionate to the overall alterations in terms of cost and
2 scope. 42 U.S.C. § 12183(a)(2).

3 21. Where parking spaces are provided, accessible parking spaces shall be
4 provided. 1991 ADA Standards § 4.1.2(5); 2010 ADA Standards § 208. One in every
5 eight accessible spaces, but not less than one, shall be served by an access aisle 96 in
6 (2440 mm) wide minimum and shall be designated “van accessible.” 1991 ADA
7 Standards § 4.1.2(5)(b). For every six or fraction of six parking spaces, at least one shall
8 be a van accessible parking space. 2010 ADA Standards § 208.2.4.

9 22. Under the ADA, the method and color of marking are to be addressed by
10 State or local laws or regulations. See 36 C.F.R., Part 1191. Under the California
11 Building Code (“CBC”), the parking space identification signs shall include the
12 International Symbol of Accessibility. Parking identification signs shall be reflectorized
13 with a minimum area of 70 square inches. Additional language or an additional sign
14 below the International Symbol of Accessibility shall state “Minimum Fine \$250.” A
15 parking space identification sign shall be permanently posted immediately adjacent and
16 visible from each parking space, shall be located with its centerline a maximum of 12
17 inches from the centerline of the parking space and may be posted on a wall at the
18 interior end of the parking space. See CBC § 11B-502.6, et seq.

19 23. Moreover, an additional sign shall be posted either in a conspicuous place at
20 each entrance to an off-street parking facility or immediately adjacent to on-site
21 accessible parking and visible from each parking space. The additional sign shall not be
22 less than 17 inches wide by 22 inches high. The additional sign shall clearly state in
23 letters with a minimum height of 1 inch the following: “Unauthorized vehicles parked in
24 designated accessible spaces not displaying distinguishing placards or special license
25 plates issued for persons with disabilities will be towed always at the owner’s expense...”
26 See CBC § 11B-502.8, et seq.

27 24. Here, Defendants failed to provide the parking space identification sign with
28 the International Symbol of Accessibility. In addition, Defendants failed to provide the

1 signs stating “Minimum Fine \$250” and “Van Accessible.” Moreover, Defendants failed
2 to provide the additional sign with the specific language stating “Unauthorized vehicles
3 parked in designated accessible spaces not displaying distinguishing placards or special
4 license plates issued for persons with disabilities will be towed always at the owner’s
5 expense...”

6 25. A public accommodation shall maintain in operable working condition those
7 features of facilities and equipment that are required to be readily accessible to and usable
8 by persons with disabilities by the Act or this part. 28 C.F.R. 35.211(a).

9 26. By failing to maintain the facility to be readily accessible and usable by
10 Plaintiff, Defendants are in violation of Plaintiff’s rights under the ADA and its related
11 regulations.

12 27. The Business has denied and continues to deny full and equal access to
13 Plaintiff and to other people with disabilities. Plaintiff has been and will continue to be
14 discriminated against due to the lack of accessible facilities, and therefore, seeks
15 injunctive relief to alter facilities to make such facilities readily accessible to and usable
16 by individuals with disabilities.

17 **SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION**

18 **VIOLATION OF THE UNRUH CIVIL RIGHTS ACT**

19 28. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
20 paragraphs in this complaint.

21 29. California Civil Code § 51 states, “All persons within the jurisdiction of this
22 state are free and equal, and no matter what their sex, race, color, religion, ancestry,
23 national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sexual
24 orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status are entitled to the full
25 and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business
26 establishments of every kind whatsoever.”

27 30. California Civil Code § 52 states, “Whoever denies, aids or incites a denial,
28 or make any discrimination or distinction contrary to Section 51, 515, or 51.6, is liable

1 for each and every offense for the actual damages, and any amount that may be
 2 determined by a jury, or a court sitting without a jury, up to a maximum of three times the
 3 amount of actual damage but in no case less than four thousand dollars (\$4,000) and any
 4 attorney's fees that may be determined by the court in addition thereto, suffered by any
 5 person denied the rights provided in Section 51, 51.5, or 51.6.

6 31. California Civil Code § 51(f) specifies, "a violation of the right of any
 7 individual under federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336)
 8 shall also constitute a violation of this section."

9 32. The actions and omissions of Defendants alleged herein constitute a denial
 10 of full and equal accommodation, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services by
 11 physically disabled persons within the meaning of California Civil Code §§ 51 and 52.
 12 Defendants have discriminated against Plaintiff in violation of California Civil Code §§
 13 51 and 52.

14 33. The violations of the Unruh Civil Rights Act caused Plaintiff to experience
 15 difficulty, discomfort, or embarrassment. The Defendants are also liable for statutory
 16 damages as specified in California Civil Code §55.56(a)-(c).

17 **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

18 **VIOLATION OF CALIFORNIA DISABLED PERSONS ACT**

19 34. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
 20 paragraphs in this complaint.

21 35. California Civil Code § 54.1(a) states, "Individuals with disabilities shall be
 22 entitled to full and equal access, as other members of the general public, to
 23 accommodations, advantages, facilities, medical facilities, including hospitals, clinics,
 24 and physicians' offices, and privileges of all common carriers, airplanes, motor vehicles,
 25 railroad trains, motorbuses, streetcars, boats, or any other public conveyances or modes
 26 of transportation (whether private, public, franchised, licensed, contracted, or otherwise
 27 provided), telephone facilities, adoption agencies, private schools, hotels, loading places,
 28 places of public accommodations, amusement, or resort, and other places in which the

1 general public is invited, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by
2 law, or state or federal regulation, and applicable alike to all persons.

3 36. California Civil Code § 54.3(a) states, “Any person or persons, firm or
4 corporation who denies or interferes with admittance to or enjoyment of public facilities
5 as specified in Sections 54 and 54.1 or otherwise interferes with the rights of an
6 individual with a disability under Sections 54, 54.1 and 54.2 is liable for each offense for
7 the actual damages, and any amount as may be determined by a jury, or a court sitting
8 without a jury, up to a maximum of three times the amount of actual damages but in no
9 case less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and any attorney’s fees that may be
10 determined by the court in addition thereto, suffered by any person denied the rights
11 provided in Section 54, 54.1, and 54.2.

12 37. California Civil Code § 54(d) specifies, “a violation of the right of an
13 individual under Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336) also
14 constitute a violation of this section, and nothing in this section shall be construed to limit
15 the access of any person in violation of that act.

16 38. The actions and omissions of Defendants alleged herein constitute a denial
17 of full and equal accommodation, advantages, and facilities by physically disabled
18 persons within the meaning of California Civil Code § 54. Defendants have
19 discriminated against Plaintiff in violation of California Civil Code § 54.

20 39. The violations of the California Disabled Persons Act caused Plaintiff to
21 experience difficulty, discomfort, and embarrassment. The Defendants are also liable for
22 statutory damages as specified in California Civil Code §55.56(a)-(c).

23 **FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

24 **CALIFORNIA HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 19955, et seq.**

25 40. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
26 paragraphs in this complaint.

27 41. Plaintiff and other similar physically disabled persons who require the use of
28 a wheelchair are unable to use public facilities on a “full and equal” basis unless each

1 such facility is in compliance with the provisions of California Health & Safety Code §
2 19955 et seq. Plaintiff is a member of the public whose rights are protected by the
3 provisions of California Health & Safety Code § 19955 et seq.

4 42. The purpose of California Health & Safety Code § 1995 et seq. is to ensure
5 that public accommodations or facilities constructed in this state with private funds
6 adhere to the provisions of Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 4450) of Division 5 of
7 Title 1 of the Government Code. The code relating to such public accommodations also
8 require that “when sanitary facilities are made available for the public, clients, or
9 employees in these stations, centers, or buildings, they shall be made available for
10 persons with disabilities.

11 43. Title II of the ADA holds as a “general rule” that no individual shall be
12 discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of goods
13 (or use), services, facilities, privileges, and accommodations offered by any person who
14 owns, operates, or leases a place of public accommodation. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a).
15 Further, each and every violation of the ADA also constitutes a separate and distinct
16 violation of California Civil Code §§ 54(c) and 54.1(d), thus independently justifying an
17 award of damages and injunctive relief pursuant to California law, including but not
18 limited to Civil Code § 54.3 and Business and Professions Code § 17200, et seq.

19 **FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

20 **NEGLIGENCE**

21 44. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
22 paragraphs in this complaint.

23 45. Defendants have a general duty and a duty under the ADA, Unruh Civil
24 Rights Act and California Disabled Persons Act to provide safe and accessible facilities
25 to the Plaintiff.

26 46. Defendants breached their duty of care by violating the provisions of ADA,
27 Unruh Civil Rights Act and California Disabled Persons Act.
28

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

1. For preliminary and permanent injunction directing Defendants to comply with the Americans with Disability Act and the Unruh Civil Rights Act;
2. Award of all appropriate damages, including but not limited to statutory damages, general damages and treble damages in amounts, according to proof;
3. Award of all reasonable restitution for Defendants' unfair competition practices;
4. Reasonable attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and costs of suit in this action;
5. Prejudgment interest pursuant to California Civil Code § 3291; and
6. Such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Pursuant to Rule 38(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff hereby demands a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

By: /s/ Jason J. Kim
Jason J. Kim, Esq.
Attorneys for Plaintiff